

IN THE DAYS OF WITCHES

Curious Mental Attitudes of Old Time Folks.

WHOLE PEOPLE WENT ALMOST CRAZY

Even the Judges on the Bench Lacked Intelligence and Character to Withstand the Peculiar Superstitions of the Day—Some of the Old Trials Re-Called.

The celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, of the first church at Danvers, Mass., recalls the fact that it was in this church the so-called "Salem witchcraft craze" had its beginning in 1692, when Danvers was a part of Salem and known as Salem Village.

The first case of witchcraft in Essex county, however, was that of Mrs. Morse of Newbury, who, in 1686, was tried in the local court and convicted. But her life was spared through the clemency of Governor Bradstreet, who first sentenced her to be hanged and then twice reprieved her sentence, in spite of the protest of the house of deputies. She was granted a new trial, at which she was acquitted.

Had Governor Bradstreet not been superseded by Sir William Phipps, under the new charter, it is doubtful if the Salem witchcraft craze would have spread into any such holocaust of suffering and terror as the whole colony was obliged to endure for several years. As Winfield F. Nevins says in his "Witchcraft of Salem Village in 1692".

"In 1692 as in 1680, he (Governor Bradstreet) dared to resist the clamors of a misguided people and judiciary and an unlearned, superstitious populace. Had Governor Phipps possessed his intelligence and firmness, the harvest of death on Witch hill would not have formed a part of our early American history."

Judges Worst of All.

It is a curious fact in this witchcraft craze in Salem, as in Boston and in Virginia and South Carolina—or wherever it was rampant—that the judiciary were infected with the virus of the delusion as badly as any other people in the community. If anything the judicial mind seemed to crystallize the intolerance, prejudice and fanaticism that marked the craze.

Of course, some excuse for this—from a legal point of view—may be found in the existing English laws on witchcraft and the court procedure that was clearly defined for such trials in 1692. And possibly some credit should be given such men as Judge Samuel Sewall, who eventually saw the absurdity of the whole thing, but not until many had suffered death or torture by their decisions.

What gives interest at this time to the craze that started in the home of the Rev. Samuel Parris, pastor of the First church in Danvers, is the manner in which it started and spread until the jails were so full of victims that the authorities were puzzled what to do with them or how to maintain them.

When you read the evidence in these old witch cases you find things mixed and jumbled together in a sort of hell broom, such as the witches in "Macbeth" brewed. Things that are credited today to epilepsy, suggestion, hypnosis, neurasthenia or nervous exhaustion, were then liable to bring one to the gallows.

In England as late as 1718, a Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, 9 years old, were hanged in Huntingdon "for selling their souls to the devil, tormenting and destroying the neighbors and raising a storm, so that ships were almost lost—by pulling off her stockings and making a lather with soap."

Wealth Brought No Exemption.

As a rule in Great Britain, however, it was the eccentric people in towns and remote places that were usually stamped as witches, while at Salem any person or class was liable to come into the dragnet. Ministers squires and merchants and their wives were as apt to be "named" and "led out" as the most mental in the community.

One of the wealthiest and most enterprising merchants of Salem was Phillip English. In fact, he was said to be the richest man in the colonies in 1692, and had at that time the finest mansion in Salem, which stood for 150 years. To the mansion at 11 o'clock one Saturday night came the high sheriff and deputy attendants, demanding admittance and the person of Mrs. English, whom they "cried out."

The officers came into the bed chamber, and, opening the curtains, read the mittimus, and ordered Mr. English to arise. She refused and they put a guard around the house.

The next day she went with the officers and was confined for six weeks in the front room of a public house, the Cat and Wheel, under guard. Three times a day her husband was permitted to see her and at the end of the six weeks he, too, was arrested.

They were sent to Boston and with the aid of powerful friends were smuggled to New York where they were kept in hiding until the "storm" blew over.

But to come back to the beginning of the craze in the home of Rev. Samuel Parris of the First church. He was the center of the excitement for some time. He had been a merchant in the West Indies before he took up the ministry, and when he came to Salem he brought with him two servants from the Barbadoes, a young woman named Tituba and her husband—half Indian and half negro.

A Servant's Voodoo Rites.

She was familiar with some of the Voodoo rites practiced by the negroes on the West India islands and she entertained Pastor Parris' children with some of the practices at times. Other children in the neighborhood joined the Parris children in the kitchen where Tituba entertained them with her crooning, her fortune telling, etc.

It wasn't long before the strange powers of Tituba were whispered about and her works and influence over the children were regarded as devilish. The children began to act strangely—or people thought they did—and after a time Mr. Parris called a meeting of ministers of the neighboring parishes to investigate and pray.

This stirred up some of the eccentric and weaker minded people in the community and then all sorts of stories were broadcast and Salem Village was a ferment of gossip—gossip that became more and more exaggerated and included besides Tituba and her husband, John Indian, several women in the village, including Sarah Good, Sarah Osburn and Bridget Bishop.

Leading citizens lodged complaints and the accused were examined in the First Meetinghouse—which gives the house its fame in this respect. The children named Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn as their "chief tormentors."

Sarah Good was about 70 years old, the wife of a laborer, a melancholy, distracted woman. She was the first to stand trial and was placed in the Ipswich jail ten miles away, from whence she was brought on horseback every morning and returned every evening over rough roads the first week of March, 1692.

A Minister a Victim.

The trial ended several months later in the death by hanging of Bridget Bishop, Sarah Good, Sarah Wildes, Rebecca Nurse and two others.

Friday, August 19, Rev. George Burroughs, who had been minister of the First church, and George Jacobs, 80 years old, of the village, were among five hanged. September 22 eight more were hanged. Two women died in prison, one of whom was 106 years old, and had been accused by her own daughter.

Giles Corey was pressed to death because he would not plead to his indictment. The law permitted torture until the victim either pleaded or died.

It was not until October that the reaction set in, and then only because nearly every family, high and low, had been made to feel the effects of the craze and the ruthless authority of the law.

Strangely enough, Tituba escaped

Cruelty in Names.—The ancient myth that Governor Hogg, of Texas, named one of his girls "Ima" and the other "Ura" is explained in a recent letter to the New York Times by Mrs. Ellen Maury Slayden, of Charlottesville, Virginia. Governor Hogg had only one daughter, it is stated. She was, Mrs. Slayden writes, "unfortunately called Ima by her mother, who had some sentimental attachment to the name and her parents never realized the disadvantage of it until she went to school and the children began to make fun of it. But it would have been untrue to the characteristics of her family to retreat under fire, so Miss Hogg kept her name, and, in spite of all temptation, continues to keep it and to prove that there's nothing in a name as a handicap to the right sort of person." Probably the girl's mother pronounced Ima as Eema, not as "I'm a"; consequently her choice of the name may not have been as cruel as it sounds. But what is to be said of the Southwest Virginian, Blazes, who

thought it a clever joke to christen his daughter Helet? And what can explain the spirit that has made Pine Coffin a name in Great Britain for more than one generation?—Richmond News-Leader.

Beasts and Reptiles.—According to statistics received from India 3,360 persons were killed by wild animals in British India during 1921 against 3,633 in the previous year.

Tigers were responsible for 1,454 deaths, leopards for 550, wolves for 556, bears for 69, elephants for 70 and hyenas for 10. The loss of human life from snake bites fell from 20,043 in 1920 to 19,396 in 1921.

Among the most marvelous pieces of recent art is the new bronze statue of Theodore Roosevelt unveiled in Portland, Oregon, a short time ago. The figure of the ex-President and his

horse towers nearly 18 feet above the granite base and depicts the spirit of the West in a splendid manner. A. Phimister Proctor, a New York sculptor and friend of the former president, did the work.

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In a Beautiful Range of Colors in Heavy Bath Robes for Children and Ladies— Children's BATH ROBES—Sizes 6 to 16 \$3.98, \$4.98 Ladies' Heavy BATH ROBES in beautiful styles. This to the MEN: You are going to buy your Better Half a pretty New Bath Robe for Santa Claus—Now is the best time—Look at this fine assortment—Priced—\$3.98 to \$6.50

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We have added a wonderful lot of Soap to our TOILET GOODS Dept.—Toilet Goods are always in favor— PERSIAN SOAP—White and Pink Six for 25 CTS. ARROW LAUNDRY SOAP Three for 10 CTS. LENOX LAUNDRY SOAP Three for 10 CTS. PRIDE WASHING POWDER Three for 10 CTS.

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Every Woman Wants to and Does Entertain Sometimes, and a pretty LUNCHEON SET always comes in nice at that time—Beautiful for Gifts— All Linen LUNCHEON SETS—Brown, Green, Blue, Rose, Tan and Oyster—Scalloped edges—One Cloth and 12 Mats—Two sizes \$2.98 All Linen LUNCHEON SETS—White, scalloped, some with Blue and some with White edges—One Cloth and 12 Mats—Two sizes \$2.98 Ladies' ALL LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS 15, 25 and 50 CTS.

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